

Ernest Mines Railroad Bridge  
Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway  
Spanning McKee Run, Ernest Mines site,  
.25 mile WSW of Ernest

Ernest  
Indiana  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-262

HAER  
PA  
32-ERN  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

### ERNEST MINES RAILROAD BRIDGE

HAER No. PA-262

Location: Spanning McKee Run, At abandoned Ernest Mines Site, .25 mile WSW of Ernest, Rayne Township, Ernest, Indiana County, Pennsylvania

USGS Quad: Bolivar (1:24000)  
UTM: 17/654050/4504200

Date of Construction: ca. 1903

Builder: Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway

Present Owner: unknown

Present Use: abandoned

Significance: The Ernest Mines Railroad Bridge is an unusual modified Baltimore through truss structure, skewed to allow the rail line to cross McKee Run at an angle.

Project Information: In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Blair, Cambria, Fayette, and Indiana counties as the first step in identifying the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

The results of this project have been published in Indiana County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (1993), edited by Ken Rose and produced by HABS/HAER for the National Park Service.

Compiler: Richard Quinn, Historian

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DESCRIPTION: Spanning McKee Run in the midst of the Rochester & Pittsburgh Coal & Iron Company mine complex at Ernest is an abandoned iron or steel railroad bridge erected about 1903 for the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway, connecting the two parts of the mine on either side of the creek. The bridge is an unusual modified Baltimore through truss structure with side and sub-struts and box ends. The skewed bridge has four panels on the north side and three on the south, allowing the rail line to cross McKee Run at an angle. The span is approximately 120' long by 17' wide, and is roughly 25' in height, with substructure material of stone and reinforced concrete.

HISTORY: The Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway was extended into Indiana County in 1903 and 1904 from Jefferson County, reaching the Rochester & Pittsburgh Coal & Iron Company's new mine operation at Ernest in late 1903. This bridge, which connected the two divisions of the mine complex, probably dates from this period. The mines continued in operation until 1965, and the connecting rail line was likely closed at this point or afterwards. Today, the bridge is poorly maintained and may be removed for its salvage value.

Sources:

Stephenson, Clarence D. *Indiana County 175th Anniversary History*, v. 2. Indiana, PA: A.G. Halldin, 1989.

**ADDENDUM TO**

**ERNEST MINES RAILROAD BRIDGE**

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Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20001